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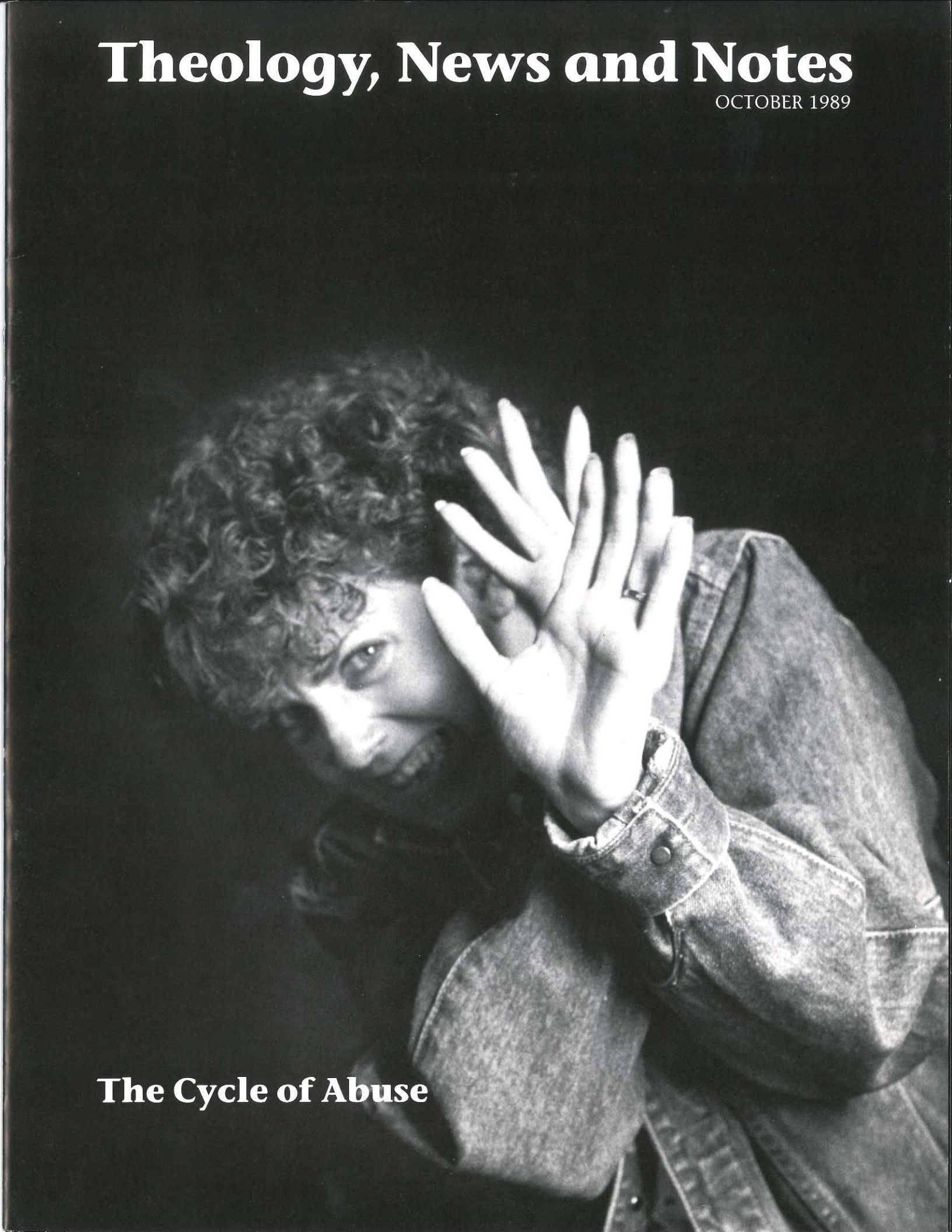

The Cycle of Abuse

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A special thanks to Lillian Davis who donated her time and dramatic talents for the photo which appears on our front cover. Her husband, Bill, is in the M.Div. program in the School of Theology.

Introduction

by Eva Baranoff, Integrator

Being given the opportunity to integrate a series of articles on various aspects of family violence through an edition of *Theology News and Notes* leaves me feeling a bit like a preacher about to make an altar call. The hope is that through such contributions, readers will be "called" to a greater level of understanding of the nature of family violence, and will be "converted" to a greater level of both sensitivity and action on behalf of the members of their respective communities who are struggling to resolve severe conflict in their lives.

Seven years ago, an entire edition of TN&N was devoted to the issue of domestic violence. It is both exciting and frustrating to look back at what has and hasn't happened since then. Exciting, in that much has occurred in the secular community to provide more appropriate support to victims and their abusers. In the State of California, for example, law enforcement officers must make an arrest if a victim has a visible injury, the district attorney's office can prosecute felony cases without the consent of the victim, and misdemeanor cases are often actively pursued by city prosecutors. Mental health practitioners are required to participate in mandatory training in the assessment and treatment of physical abuse and sexual molestation of children in order to qualify for a license to practice. All of these gains mean an increased likelihood of victims or perpetrators receiving informed help as they attempt to eliminate violence from their lives.

Despite these gains, there is cause for frustration. Violence is on the increase. New laws and additional resources have done little to either assure continuity of services, or to deal with the source of the problem of violence. Despite the best efforts of many, overt and covert attitudes condoning violence within the family and in society at large continue to prevail. Funds that would foster the growth of services to heal the physical and emotional wounds that abuse causes continue to dwindle at an ever increasing rate. And through it all, we all suffer.

In the Christian community, I have met a growing number of pastors and parishoners who have endeavored to become informed about the problem of family violence in order to become an integral part of the solution. A number of books have been published, many are listed here in the bibliography, that address from a Christian point of view the biblical and ethical issues of family violence. Conferences focusing specifically on educating and networking in the Christian community about family violence such as the "Healing the Cycle of Abuse" seminar which is held annually at Fuller, have been informative and well attended. Progress is being made.

However, as much as I take pleasure in the ways in which we as Christians are wrestling with how to make a positive impact on family violence, it is not only the "saved" that I am concerned about, but also the "unsaved." We continue to see far too many victims in our family violence clinic who have been further traumatized by seeking help from their pastors or fellow members of their congregations. When a church community engages in blaming the victim, insisting on actions that feed the violence in the family, the victim is placed in an untenable position. The victim then faces not only the painful choice of whether to remain in or leave a relationship with a physically and emotionally hurtful partner or parent, but also whether to risk the loss of the entire community upon which they have traditionally relied for strength and support.

The focus is still too often on insisting that the victims bear the burden of the blame or the responsibility for the violence in their homes. We have yet to learn how to consistently place the burden of accountability on those who abuse. As Christians, we profess to seek to discern and live out God's will for our individual lives and for creation as a whole. Our mandate is to bring the reparative gift of God's love and light to those who are experiencing pain. The question facing all of us with respect to family violence is, in what way are we to be a part of the solution? In what way is it our individual and collective responsibility to contribute to the healing of the brokeness that occurs in families who suffer the physical, spiritual and emotional

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trauma of abuse? If we can protect and comfort the victim, and hold accountable and comfort the perpetrator, we are indeed an active part of the solution. The authors of the following articles challenge each of us to confront our limitations with respect to our ability to come to terms with violence, our own and that of others. They challenge us to stretch our understanding of what it is like for both the recipient and the giver of abuse to experience a dysfunctional relationship. And, finally, they make suggestions of steps we can take to become a very real part of the solution. As you read this edition of *Theology News and Notes*, ask yourself how you are contributing to the healing of this form of hurt that affects at least 25 percent of the people in our congregations, our communitites, our nation. How do or will we contribute to breaking the cycle of violence that now repeats itself generation after generation? How will we help bring about the kingdom of God on earth? ■

Eva C. Gerasimoff

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall,

by Cynthia Stout

When most of us think of "abusive" behaviors, we think of people being beaten, of adults sodomizing children, of rape or of fury-filled screaming and yelling. But how many of us think of Archie Bunker, or the mother who tells her child, "You never do anything right;" or the parents, who night after night, stay late at work to finish that "one last thing," missing dinner with their family? Most of us would consider these people to be, at worst, inconsiderate. The truth is, that they represent examples of abusive behaviors—mildly abusive, but abusive nonetheless.

When most of us think about "offenders" we automatically exclude ourselves, exclaiming, "I could never do anything like that." To guard against uncomfortable feelings of human vulnerability, we conclude that offenders must be "evil", "sinful," "disturbed" persons, as no Christian person would ever abuse another human being. The truth of the matter is that our Christianity does not innoculate us from the potentially destructive expression of inner pain and turmoil. The unfortunate reality of the human condition is that we all possess the potential to be abusive. Whether or not that potential is realized is dependent upon the nature of our relationship with God, and with ourselves.

From an awareness of human potential (for both good and evil), from a deeply felt conviction that "there but for the grace of God go I," we free God's blessing of empathy to surface within us. It is only through empathy that we can serve as a conduit for God's healing grace. Christian empathy allows for the creation of a safe and supportive interpersonal environment in which Christians can reveal their inner shame, horror, and their offenses. Empathy allows us to confront the offender caringly, to say, "I believe you're in pain, and from that pain, you're hurting others." Empathy is what prevents us, as Christians, from casting the first stone. It allows and challenges us to move beyond condemning the behavior to accepting the person as God's creation in need of healing salvation. As we are all made in God's image, and God is good, there is good to be found in all people. As Christians, we are bound to look for that good—the living Christ—in others. We are compelled to bring out the best in others and to lovingly guide them back into their Christian walk when they stray.

We live in a lawful society, one that for the good of the many, sets limits on our individual behavior. These laws guide and encourage us to live respectfully with one another, to take into consideration the rights of others when we act. As Christians, we live not only by the laws and limits of the secular world, but also by God's commandments. It is incomprehensible that a person raised in our society, and in the Church, is unaware of what is right and what is wrong. On the surface, it may appear that offenders are unaware of the distinction between right and wrong behavior or that they have chosen to pursue single-mindedly their self-serving desires, and in so doing, violate the rights of their victims.

With the exception of a small percentage, offenders are men and women who do know that abusiveness is wrong. They know that it is sinful and abhorrent to abuse another person. As abusers, their very behavior puts them in conflict with

Who's the Greatest Offender of All?

themselves. This conflict arises because they are made in God's image, created and endowed with the motivation to "be good" and to strive for what is right and just. In order to cope with this conflict, offenders characteristically minimize and deny their behavior. In order to live with themselves, they attempt to convince themselves and others that what they did was not wrong or hurtful. While most look at an offender's denial as "adding insult to injury," it is actually a very important element in the healing process. For the fact that offenders deny the significance of their abusive behaviors indicates that they have moral consciences. It indicates they know what they did was wrong and that they are ashamed to confess it. It is rather like the child who, when caught with a hand in the cookie jar, staunchly denies attempting to sneak a cookie.

Offenders have an awareness on some level that what they are doing is wrong. Yet, unlike others, they are seemingly unable to control their impulses. They offend because they are experiencing a motivational force even stronger than the innate, God-given drive towards goodness. It would be very easy to assume that the stronger motivation is pure "evil," but in fact, it is pain. Evil may be a part of it, but it is not enough to write it off to "Satan's influence." We are all subject to evil influences, yet we do not all offend. That explanation of the offender's behavior serves only to distance us from the problem and obviates our responsibility to facilitate the healing process.

Abusiveness is not like other offenses-say running a red light, not paying income tax, or stealing. True, there are "victims" in those crimes, but abusiveness is distinctly different in that beyond physical violation, abuse violates the essence, the spirit, of the victim. Offenders typically abuse someone they know and love, a spouse, child, parent or partner. In their abusiveness, they are violating the most sacrosanct of social and religious taboos. The nature of the offense of abusiveness is devastating testimony to the degree of pain experienced by the offender.

In order for us to understand and help offenders, we must understand the nature of their pain. Characteristically, the pain experienced by abusive persons has its roots in childhoods marred by turmoil and abuse. While not all abused children go on to become offenders, almost every offender was the victim of child abuse or was exposed to parental violence. In an abusive home, there are by definition, no role models of healthy and appropriate parenting and marital relationships. Children in such homes have only two options: to identify with the victim or with the offender. For example, when children grow up in a home where their mother hits their father, it makes good sense to want to be "just like mommy." After all, she is seemingly the person with all the power, and more importantly, she doesn't get hurt. Abused children are denied the opportunity to develop a positive self-image, confidence in their abilities, an awareness of their emotional needs, feelings of interpersonal security and trust, or a sense of personal adequacy. Such children are grossly ill-prepared to fully accept and manage the demands of adulthood. In identifying with the offender, in living out what they learned in childhood, these "victim-offenders" essentially become, not "wolves in sheep's clothing," but "sheep in wolves' clothing."

In understanding offenders, it is also essential to understand the offense. For example, child sexual abuse is not a crime of "sexuality." It is not about being sexual with children at all. It's true that there are a small number of pedophiles whose primary object choice is children. But the vast majority of offenders are not pedophiles. Rather, they are child molesters. They are typically heterosexual, married women (yes,women) and men, who look just like you and me. It makes it neat and simple to think of the offense as being about sex. But if it were, there are plenty of more satisfying ways to meet one's sexual desires other than having sex with children.

Women and men are sexual with children because of unbearable feelings of isolation and inadequacy which are independent of how successful they may appear. Due to a deprived, abusive childhood, they lack a sense of being a worthwhile, loveable person. Like all people, they yearn for intimacy, the close emotional sharing of heart and soul with another. Yet, unlike most people, they have not learned how to be intimate, how to risk that degree of vulnerability. In the vulnerability of childhood, they were betrayed to the core. As an abused child, they learned that the only time they had value to another person, the only time they felt close to another person, was when they were being sexualized. They learned to equate intimacy with sexuality.

Child sexual abuse is a crime of intimacy. If the offense were about sex, the offenders would go to their preferred object choice, their husband, wife, or an adult heterosexual

"Whereas child abuse is a problem of intimacy, domestic violence is a problem of inadequacy."

or homosexual partner. But because the offense is about intimacy, they turn to children. Children, by nature, are accepting and loving, whereas adults are often conditional in their acceptance and love. Offenders fear intimacy with adults because they anticipate rejection, abandonment, betrayal and being "found out" for the inadequate, unloveable person they believe themselves to be. Because intimacy has been confused with sexuality, because they are unable to meet their intimacy needs in appropriate peer relationships, they become physically "intimate" with a child.

Because child molesters were themselves abused as children, many poeple tend to want to hold them to a higher level of accountability. It's believed that they, from their own horrific experience of being victimized, should be the last person to inflict that same pain on another. That might be true, if their victimization had been identified and they had received intervention and treatment as a child. Most offender's victimization went unnoticed in their childhood. They did not receive treatment or an opportunity to heal those early wounds. Instead, those wounds were left to fester. Offenders are devastatingly and sensitively aware of the pain of child abuse. But that personal awareness alone is seldom enough to prevent them from taking care of their emotional needs for intimacy and validation through the only way they have known—abuse. The awareness of the destructiveness of abuse only intensifies their underlying pain, making them feel even more shameful and worthless.

Just as child sexual abuse is not about "sex", partner abuse, or domestic abuse is not about anger or violence per se. While it is easy to view the physical attack upon a person by another as pure and simple violence, very few offenders are violent outside of their home. That is because their identity, security, and sense of personal meaning is in the home, in their partner, not in friends or co-workers. Whereas child abuse is a problem of intimacy, domestic violence is a problem of inadequacy. As with child molesters, perpetrators of partner abuse were most likely victims themselves. In their childhood they were exposed to their own physical abuse or witnessed the abuse of one or both parents at the hand of the other. Typically, they received no protection, no intervention, no treatment.

These are men and women who learned early on that no matter what they did, it wasn't good enough. There would always be some reason for being hit and beaten. They were deprived of an opportunity to feel safe in conflict, to negotiate, to recognize and express their emotional needs with the trusting security that they would be listened to and responded to. As they had no control over the beatings that they received or witnessed as a child, they were deprived of an opportunity to feel as if they had control in any intimate part of their lives.

These children grow up to believe that they are not deserving of love. When, as adults, they enter into loving relationships, they are clouded by their insecurities and their fears of ultimate rejection and abandonment. They become highly dependent on their partner for a sense of well-being, of being loveable and worthy. Understandably, they become very protective of that external source of internal emotional security. They become excruciatingly sensitive to perceived rejection, and hence, become possessive, jealous and demanding. When they feel threatened by loss, they know no other way but to strike out in an attempt to hang on to what they believe to be theirs—an extension of themselves embodied in their partners.

Developing empathy and understanding of offenders and their offenses is only half of our responsibility in facilitating the healing process. The second half has to do with holding the offenders responsible for their actions and accountable for the consequences of their behavior. Creating an environment through empathy and understanding in which offenders can confess their offenses is not enough to guarantee that their behavior will change, or that their victim will no longer be at risk. Beyond acknowledging their behavior, in true repentance, offenders must actively strive to change their behavior.

Upon hearing the confession of an offender, it's not enough to say, "Stop it," or Pray about it." We need to be familiar enough with community resources, or with people who are, to direct the offender to appropriate treatment. We need to be willing to confront offenders who are not actively participating in a therapeutic

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A Pastoral Response to Domestic Violence

by Elizabeth Nordquist

The newspaper this morning carries a small story of the death of a two-year-old child who died three days after being hospitalized in what a 19-year veteran of the police force described as the worst case of child abuse he had ever seen. The child's mother and the man with whom she lived are being arraigned for murder. Where did the cycle of violence start? Who knew about it? Who could have begun a process of intervention and healing that could have prevented the death of this little one? Could the Church of Jesus Christ have been there? All present-day pastors are faced with the knowledge that domestic violence touches the lives of the congregations which they serve. We know if we read the statistics of our society; if we are observant of the lives of our congregations, if we let ourselves hear the stories of our parishioners.

Violence in families is not a new phenomenon; what is new is an increasing willingness on the part of people in the United States to name it, to speak about it and to seek healing from its damage, even in the Church. The legal agencies and justice system have more capability to intervene in situations of abuse and violence than ever before. Counseling centers have become more proficient in leading people into recovery—both from victimization by violence and addiction to perpetration of violence. It is crucial for pastors to become informed channels of God's grace for the healing of domestic violence. It is imperative that we bring the Word of God and a Christian perspective of justice and mercy to these tragic situations as part of the process of stopping the chain of violence in our families and of healing the deep personal wounds of those entrusted to our pastoral care.

In my ministry with both men and women, I have been deeply disturbed by account after account of abuse in families of self-proclaimed Christians. I have heard many stories— stories that occured long before the telling—stories of people who had lived with the pain and the shame of being a victim of abuse for years—stories of pain and shame turned into a self-image of brokeness and self hate. What is more shocking to me than the stories of abuse themselves, are the reports of many of these people who went to pastors for spiritual counsel and were either blamed for being the victim, accused of being a *provacateur*, or not believed at all and reprimanded for being troublemakers. Added to the sense of betrayal at the hands of the abuser, was a sense of betrayal by the pastor, by the church and by God.

I have come to believe that there are some very important things that must become a part of our pastoral response if we are to be faithful servants of our people. The first is to be willing to hear and to believe that violence does occur, and has occurred in the lives of those who come to us. When a parishioner comes to a pastor with a story of domestic violence, the moment of disclosure can be a sacred moment—one that calls for compassion, trust, faith and grace which acknowledges the great risk being taken. The stories I have heard are very difficult to hear. The fear, the shame, the brutality, the pain and injury are hard to believe, hard to fathom, hard to tolerate. Yet, the very first gift of redemption I can offer is to listen and to believe that the story being told me is important, serious, and life-defining for the person who tells it to me. Media attention has made us all aware of false charges or exaggerated claims of abuse. But, the risk of mistakes cannot keep us from being willing to risk opening our ears and hearts to the truth of someone's brokeness. Part of me resists hearing these stories, so full of horror. I don't want to believe that such respectable and attractive people are caught in this ugly cycle of violence. I also know that the resolution of this issue in a family is complex, time-consuming and untidy. I cannot send someone from my office on a "wing and a prayer." I must be willing first to face the darkness with my parishioners and help them name it and affirm that the evil power of violence must be broken.

Another part of our pastoral response to the phenomenon of domestic violence must be to become informed and aware of its nature. We now know some very definite characteristics of the cycle of violence. We know it is addictive, that the very behaviors reinforce themselves. We know that it is often a learned pattern of behavior—that abusers very likely were victims of abuse themselves. We know that it is a difficult cycle to stop from inside or out. It is mandatory that pastors become aware of the patterns and signs of the presence of violence in families, so that they will be able both to recognize indicators of domestic violence and also be wise in designing strategies for treatment and healing. Part of the self-education process must be to learn the legal requirements for reporting abuse in your state, the

"...to refuse to become informed of the nature of the cycle of violence is to endanger human life..."

agencies to whom one must report, the processes of reporting and assisting the healing of victims and abusers. Pastors can be reluctant to become informed of these responsibilities and skills because the prospect of using them is unpleasant, even frightening. However, to refuse to become informed of the nature of the cycle of violence is to endanger human life and contribute to the maiming of human bodies, minds, and spirits.

Pastors have a particular responsibility to do their exegetical and theological homework before counseling cases of domestic violence. Tragically, health professionals in hospitals and recovery centers tell story after story of abusers in therapy, sitting with Bible in hand, jusitfying their abusive behavior with "Christian" belief systems of domestic life based on hierarchical tyranny shored up with physical abuse. They believe they have learned from Scripture that physical violence is God's intention for maintaining order and harmony in the family. It is essential that we as pastors correct that misunderstanding. We must show the abusers that Jesus calls us to ways of peace, demonstrating power by serving, and living with grace, not law and force. To the victims we need to proclaim the good news that love, God's love, is not something to be earned, but is graciously given, and that not one of God's creatures deserves to be beaten, harassed or molested. The gracious word of the Gospel must be offered as a way that can shift the paradigm for families caught up in perpetrating violent behaviors.

Finally, a pastor must pray for, and be willing to become courageous and assertive in dealing with families caught in the cycle of domestic violence. It takes courage to listen, and to keep listening, to the history and ongoing telling of abuse. It takes courage to participate in an intervention in a family where violence is present. It takes courage to address the issue with the wider community of faith—with boards and committees who will not always want to have the issues addressed, and with congregations who may feel that teaching and preaching about such issues are inappropriate activities. It will take courage to face angry family members who will deny, manipulate and resent any involvement or attempt to change and heal a family system. It takes courage to pursue a course of action where a mistake of judgement can cause irreparable damage to reputation and life. And it takes wisdom, compassion and gentleness. However, the risks of not being involved are greater. Not to become an advocate for the abused, oppressed and battered in our own churches is to turn our back on God's loved ones who are in God's eyes worthy of justice and mercy, and forgiveness and healing. We know that in doing this for the "least" in God's kingdom, we are doing it for God.

Where was the Church when the little two-year-old died? Historically, the Church has not always been there for the "least of these." It wasn't there for the spouse who believed she deserved the abuse she got because she was not an adequate sexual partner. It wasn't there for the battered person who was told she must have been "asking for it." It wasn't there for the abuser whose own psycho-spiritual history of being abused left him addicted to and at the mercy of his own rage. It wasn't there for children, frightened and inarticulate in their pain and grief, who had no other advocate.

In this era of the history of the Church in North America, we must be there to respond to Christ's call to bring liberty to captives, good tidings to the afflicted and to bind up the brokenhearted. Pastors must lead the way—in hearing the truth, in knowing the disease of violence and its causes, in rightly proclaiming Scripture, in risking rejection and disfavor and in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel and incarnating its saving grace in lives caught in the deadly cycle of domestic violence. ■

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Elder Abuse: A Challenge to the Church

by Donna Benton and Susan Lichtman

Aileen M. is 75 years old. She is confined to her bed and dependent on others for all of her daily needs. When the police arrived at her home, alerted by a concerned neighbor, she had not eaten for three days and had bed sores all over her back. Her daughter, her primary caregiver, had not been to her home in over a week.

Ed B. had been successful in business. Now, 70 years old and suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, he must rely on others to take care of his finances. His savings accounts, once over six figures, are now close to zero. His nephew, who is his conservator, has developed a cocaine habit.

Abuse knows no cultural, socio-economic or age barriers. Violence against older adults takes many forms, and is often never discovered. The denial that frequently accompanies child and spousal abuse is also a prevalent issue in the detection, intervention and prevention of elder abuse.

There is no clear profile that identifies an abuser or someone who is likely to be abused. This is especially true regarding violence against older adults. Persons who were once vital and able to care for themselves become dependent on others, leaving them open for abuse. The role reversal that can accompany the aging process can create stresses in parent-child relationships that end in violence. Elder abuse can also be a continuation of the cycle of violence already established in a family, which becomes more lethal with age.

Types of Elder Abuse

Elder abuse can be broadly defined as any act which places the older adult at risk for physical, psychological or financial harm. Such abuse can come from a spouse, an adult child, another relative, or a caregiver. It occurs in the secrecy of private homes, convalescent facilities and hospitals.

Physical abuse of older adults takes many forms, both active, as in crimes of actual physical violence, and passive, as in crimes of neglect. Physical abuse includes hitting, shoving, withholding of medication, failure to provide food and proper hygiene, and the improper use of restraints. As persons age and become more physically fragile, the impact of physical abuse becomes more life-threatening.

Sexual abuse of older adults is often overlooked. Because of our cultural stereotypes, we rarely consider seniors persons who are sexually active or sexually desirable. This misunderstanding of both the dynamics of sexual abuse and the sexuality of older adults combine to make detection or acknowledgement of sexual abuse against them difficult at best. In addition, this is also one of the most difficult kinds of abuse for seniors to disclose. The shame and fear experienced by those who have been sexually abused often encourages them to keep silent.

Psychological or emotional abuse of older adults usually occurs in relationship to the developing dependency that can accompany aging. Often, this type of abuse takes the form of threats of institutionalization, abandonment, or refusal to continue as a caregiver. The long-term effects of emotional abuse can lead to depression, which for many seniors is manifested in symptoms of memory loss, confusion, and social withdrawal.

When depression occurs in later life, it is often confused with dementia, leading to premature out-of-home placement, misdiagnosis, and the use of inappropriate medication. This can frequently turn a treatable, reversible problem into a chronic illness.

Financial, or fiduciary abuse, takes place when a person is forced, coerced, or misled into making poor monetary decisions. Misuse of monies entrusted to a primary caregiver or conservator is also considered fiduciary abuse. The term "fiduciary," meaning "held in trust," implies that a conservator will act according to the will and best interest of the conservatee. A violation of this trust can result in the loss of a family residence, loss of savings, or an inability to continue to adequately care for one's own financial needs.

Detection of Elder Abuse

In order to detect abusive behavior, one must first be willing to acknowledge that it occurs. Our cultural mores state that, as a society, we respect and care for older adults. As with child abuse, the abuser is often protected by the denial of those who may best be able to help the victim. Our own views of the aging process often inhibit our willingness to confront signs of abuse. Confusion and depression are seen as "natural" parts of growing older. Bruises and broken bones are easily ignored, or rationalized as a natural consequence of being frail or unstable.

"Denial and ignorance will not make the problem of elder abuse go away."

Poor memory is an excuse used to explain the disappearance of funds.

To move beyond denial and ageism, we must become better observers, and be willing to ask questions. Uncharacteristic changes in behavior are not a normal part of the aging process, but can be signs of disease, or abuse. We should be willing to investigate why persons have suddenly become withdrawn, or why they have multiple injuries. Red flags to an observer are multiple bruises, bed sores, weight loss, fearfulness, changes in cognitive functioning, and social withdrawal. Elder abuse often happens in a family because the problems of caregiving become overwhelming. Lack of support, or knowledge of alternatives to assist with caregiving lead to frustration, anger, and the possibliity of abusive behavior. Observers should be concerned when caregivers are unwilling to ask for help even when they are overworked. Caregivers who are abusing alcohol or drugs will have poor judgement, especially when the role of caregiving becomes stressful. Neglect sometimes occurs when caregivers are responsible for two generations, making it difficult to balance the needs of both their children and their parents. A history of child abuse often leads to elder abuse when the adult child becomes a caregiver.

Intervention By the Church

As one of the most significant support systems of the family, the church is in a unique position to provide means for the prevention of, and intervention in, cases of elder abuse. It is estimated that one in four seniors will be abused. This means that abuse is likely to occur within church families, whether it is detected or not. Knowing this fact, churches should be prepared to actively provide resources to families who are at risk, as well as intervention when abuse is detected. Education is one of the best preventive measures that can be taken against abuse. Churches should be aware of local senior resource agencies that can educate caregivers about both aging and community assistance programs. Classes can be given within the church on various topics that will give caregivers tools for adequate coping with the task of caring for an older adult. Seminars on stress management, the physical processes of aging, Alzheimer's Disease, and coping with a frail senior, are some of the areas that could be covered.

Another way to meet the needs of at-risk families is to provide respite care when needed. Respite allows caretakers to be relieved from their responsibilities for a proscribed period of time. Volunteers can visit for an afternoon, or a weekend, giving caregivers time away from the stresses of daily management of a relative. Support groups for caregivers are another way of providing respite. Giving a forum for dialogue, joint problem solving, and socialization is often a revitalizing experience for the caregiver.

A visitation ministry to isolated seniors within a congregation is another preventive measure that can be taken. Giving seniors consistent, caring contact can reduce dependence on caregivers who may be abusing them, leading to disclosure of abusive behavior and appropriate intervention. When seniors are living in out-of-home placements, visitation sends a message to caregivers that the condition of the resident is being monitored, which is often a deterrent to abuse. A final important intervention that can be made by the church is appropriate referral. Social service agencies, psychologists, physicians, and legal aid services are all important resources in the fight against elder abuse.

Denial and ignorance will not make the problem of elder abuse go away. As the number of older adults within church congregations continues to increase, the role of the church in prevention, detection, and intervention must also increase. Sophistication and knowledge about the problems of older adults and caregiving can lead to creative prevention and intervention programs within the context of a caring and concerned community. ■

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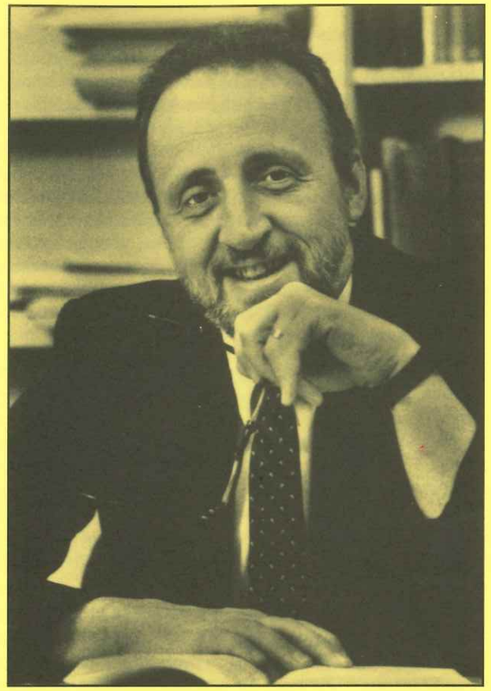

PROFILE *of a* PROVOST

Richard J. Mouw, Ph.D., Provost, Professor of Christian Philosophy and Ethics

FULLER THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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Richard Mouw was raised in a Christian home where both fundamentalism and Dutch Calvinist pietism were formative influences. It was through the early influence of parents, evangelists, Sunday School teachers, and youth workers that he became impressed of his need to know the redemptive embrace of Jesus as personal Savior.

As an undergraduate English major at Houghton College in New York, an evangelical college of the Wesleyan Church, Mouw began to develop a Christian worldview and to wrestle with how best to understand the nature of the lordship of Christ. He studied with great interest the writings of Carl Henry, E.J. Carnell, Cornielius Van Til, Gordon Clark and other conservative Protestants who argued with each other about how best to assess the intellectual efforts of non-evangelical thinkers. A few weeks before beginning graduate studies in philosophy at the University of Alberta, he heard a live telecast of Martin Luther King's now famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

"Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado! Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California! But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia! Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee. Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississiippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring. And when this happens, and when we allow freedom to ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of that old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

The words had a powerful impact on Mouw and he found himself responding positively to the calls for peace and justice being made on secular campuses across North America. While joining in protests against racial injustice and militant nationalism, Mouw did not always find it easy to maintain a strong sense of identity with the evangelical community, yet he was not able to accept the ideology of secular radicalism, nor the "social gospel" of Protestant liberals. During this time he explored in earnest the concept of Christ as King, whose authority transcends that of earthly rulers. For guidance, he turned to the writings of the Dutch "neo-Calvinists." Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism had an especially strong influence on his thinking. He discovered that Kuyper had kindred spirits in people like Lewis Smedes, Nicholas Woltersrorff and Henry Stob, all scholars associated with *The Reformed Journal*.

Having completed his master's in philosophy, Mouw enrolled in a doctoral program at the University of Chicago, completing his Ph.D. in philosophy in 1971. His dissertation is entitled, "The Identification of Behavior and the Problem of Other Minds."

Following a number of part-time teaching positions, Mouw, in 1968, had joined the faculty of Calvin College, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, a school affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church. He would teach there for 17 years, gaining the rank of full professor in 1974.

In September of 1985, Mouw accepted an invitation to join the faculty of the School of Theology at Fuller as Professor of Christian Philosophy and Ethics. He was attracted to Fuller, he said, by its cross-cultural, multinational tone, its ecumenical and multidenominational breadth and its commitment to raising up a new generation of both women and men in ministry.

As a professor at Fuller, Mouw has encouraged evangelical Christians to reflect critically on basic philosophical and ethical issues crucial to discipleship in today's world, and has actively pursued the goals of ecumenism. He has served on the board of the Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research in Collegeville, Minnesota since 1985. He also serves as an advisor on religious freedom to the American Jewish Committee and is co-chair, with Msgr. Royale Vadakin, of the Los Angeles area evangelical-Roman Catholic dialogue.

Following four years of outstanding service to the Seminary as a professor, Mouw was appointed provost, effective September 25, 1989. He succeeds Lawrence DenBesten, M.D. who died of cancer in June of 1988.

"The relief I feel that Richard Mouw is now our provost comes not from the mere sharing of labor and responsibility," says seminary president, David Allan Hubbard. "It comes from the optimism his appointment brings to the future of Fuller. He has the ability and desire to keep us on course because of his strong evangelical commitment, the breadth of his academic experience and his grasp of the need for church renewal. He has a combination of head and heart that you look for in academic leadership."

Mouw's appointment is the first of four key administrative appointments to take place during the next six years. David Allan Hubbard, president of the seminary since 1963, will retire in 1995. Other anticipated retirements during this period include the deans of the schools of World Mission and Theology.

As the second-highest-ranking administrator at Fuller, Mouw would like to encourage improvement in five major areas: interschool relations; interprogram relations; morale; perserving and defining Fuller's evangelical identity and ensuring that the day to day operations of the Seminary reflect the five imperatives of "The Mission Beyond the Mission." He hopes to keep alive "the bigger questions about why we're here, what larger causes we're serving and what our ultimate goals are."

"Evangelicalism is more than a movement," Mouw says. "Certainly, more than a church. It is a vision of life, a way of looking at reality. For Fuller to survive with its evangelical identity intact requires that it pay close attention to vision. Because Fuller is not officially sponsored by any single denomination, the vision of its leadership is very important in setting the course the school will take. As a philosopher and an ethicist, I see one of my contributions as being someone who can help keep the conversation going about what our vision is."

But Mouw is quick to add, "We can't take our own authority too seriously, no matter what our job, it's an authority under an authority that far transcends anything that we know about. It's not our institution, our kingdom.... Institutions come and go and they are important only so far as they fit into God's plan for a specific time in history. Ultimately, what is important is that God is glorified." ■

Dr. Mouw is the author of seven books: *Political Evangelism* (Eerdmans, 1973), *Politics and the Biblical Drama* (Eerdmans 1976; Baker, repr. 1983), *Called to Holy Worldliness* (Fortress, 1980), *Objections to Christianity* (Christian Reformed Publishing House, 1981), *When the Kings Come Marching In* (Eerdmans, 1983), *Distorted Truth* (Harper and Row, Oct. 1989), and *The God Who Commands*, (University of Notre Dame Press, to be released January, 1990)

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"I am delighted with the appointment of Richard Mouw to be our new provost. He brings a wealth of experience, a solid evangelical commitment to the gospel, and a vision for the church in and around the world. His leadership in this important post will continue to enrich and deepen our lives together."
Robert P. Meye, Dean, School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary

"The standing ovation which the faculty, students and staff gave to Dr. Richard Mouw at our recent Festival of Beginnings, I think, is perhaps the strongest supporting statement anyone can give to the welcome news that he has accepted the Provost's position. The whole Fuller community rejoices in his decision. Not only does he bring a great degree of academic sophistication to the role of provost, but I especially believe he brings a full measure of humanness and sensitivity. I can think of no person better suited to bridge between the three schools than Richard Mouw."
Arch Hart, Dean, Graduate School of Psychology, Fuller Theological Seminary

"Since I first met him, I have been especially impressed with three qualities which Richard has shown over and over again. The first is his great theological integrity. His faith and thought are clearly centered in the Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection. The second, which goes hand-in-hand with the first, is his great awareness of the world around us. He is concerned to make sure the gospel addresses a changing world in ways that are constructive and meaningful. Thus I see Richard as a missiologist, concerned to communicate the Good News to our contemporary, secularized world. The third quality which I applaud is his wisdom. More than once in faculty meetings I have seen him bring a word of wisdom which has enabled us to come to unity around an issue. I look forward greatly to working with him."
Paul E. Pierson, Dean, School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary

"If I were set the task of designing the ideal administrator for a seminary, Richard Mouw is what I would come up with. Brilliant, articulate, an attentive listener, deeply compassionate, decisive but not overbearing—he is all of these, and best of all, he has a sense of humor. He cares passionately about the church and the academy, and he knows how foolish ecclesiastics and academics can be when they take themselves too seriously. Richard Mouw is among the most skilled bridge-builders on the current ecumenical scene. With him as provost, Fuller Theological Seminary will continue to be a leader in fashioning new forms of understanding and cooperation between Christians."
Dr. Patrick G. Henry, Executive Director, Institute for Ecumenical and Cultural Research, Collegeville, Minnesota 56321

"In the search for senior administrators, it is the goal of every school to appoint a person who embodies the ideals to which the institution is dedicated. Fuller Seminary has succeeded in this regard by appointing Richard Mouw to the office of provost. His informed vision of theological education and the extraordinary intellectual and personal resources at his command by which to project and implement his vision are prime requisites for effective leadership in our time. I commend the Seminary and its president, Dr. David Allan Hubbard, for the appointment of Dr. Mouw to this important post. The entire profession will benefit from his leadership."
Dr. Leon Pacala, Executive Director, Association of Theological Schools, United States and Canada

"I extend my heartfelt felicitations to Dr. Mouw as he assumes his new position. Fuller Theological Seminary could not have selected an abler person for this responsibility. Dr. Mouw is an outstanding scholar. He loves people and knows how to build bridges between them. And above all, he has a precious sense of humor—a wonderful resource for any provost."
Rabbi Alfred Wolf, Director, Skirball Institute on American Values of the American Jewish Committee

Suffer the Little Children

by Cynthia Stout

In the Gospels, Christ challenges us to "become like children" in our Christian lives, to assume the innocence, humility and simplicity of children. As adults, he challenges us to protect children and to gently led them to God through our expressions of Christ's love. In listening and working with children, I have become aware of how far astray we sometimes go in our efforts, both in protecting children and in teaching them the true meaning and comfort of God's love. I'd like to take this opportunity to share with you some of what I've learned...through the voices and eyes of children.

Jennifer

"Mommy tells me to say my prayers every night before I go to sleep. Mommy says God'll protect me if I do. Maybe he's too busy taking care of other kids, 'cause most nights, right while I'm saying my prayers like mommy says to, my daddy comes in and hurts me." At all of eight years of age, Jennifer is confused and betrayed. By a daddy who says he loves her after he's done hurting her. By a mommy who tells her to mind her own business when Jennifer asks, "Why does daddy leave your room at night?" She doesn't hear that in her own way, Jennifer is asking for her help. Jennifer wonders if she is also betrayed by God because she says her prayers every night and he doesn't protect her the way that her mommy promises he will. "Maybe it's because I'm a bad girl," she concludes. "Sometimes I have accidents and wet my pants and I don't always pay attention in school. And I don't always go to bed right when mommy tells me to. I'm scared to go to bed."

Jason

"Daddy tells me that 'big boys don't cry.' Promise you won't tell anyone, but I cry. But only when mommy and daddy are yelling and hitting each other. They think we're asleep when they fight. But they throw things and yell so loud it wakes me up. The neighbors hear it, too. I know 'cause Kevin told me his parents were going to call the cops, but decided it was none of their business. They just don't like all the noise. I go into Sarah's room 'cause she's younger and gets real scared. I have to keep her safe in the closet. Sometimes mommy comes in and screams that we're leaving. Then I get really scared 'cause they fight each other right in front of Sarah. And I'm afraid that daddy'll see I've been crying and spank me." At six years of age Jason has learned a lot from his parents, other than he's not supposed to cry. He's learned that wives are supposed to obey their husbands and when they don't you have to punish them, just like parents do kids. And after mommy and daddy fight they love each other more. They get real nice to each other—for awhile. Then it happens again. He's learned that most of the time it's kids' fault when parents hurt each other. Because most of the time they start off by yelling about them. He's learned that it's nobody's business what goes on in his house, even if it's scary and people are getting hurt and crying. He wonders if that's true if his mommy or daddy gets hurt real bad and dies. He's afraid that will happen because he hears his mommy yelling that she's gonna kill his daddy and sometimes mommy gets hurt so bad she can't get out of bed in the morning to get their breakfast. Then he has to make cereal for Sarah. But Sarah doesn't like how much milk he puts on. She cries and won't eat it. "Maybe if I hit her like daddy does mommy," he thinks," she'd quit complaining and eat it when I tell her to."

Peter

"When my mommy gets mad at me she has to punish me. She says it's on account of that I'm bad and the Bible says 'spare the rod, spoil the child.' Miss Little, she's my Sunday School teacher, she says that Jesus doesn't want anyone to be hurt, but when mommy uses her rod it hurts a lot. Sometimes I can't sit down. One time Father Williams saw a bruise on my arm and told me I shouldn't be fighting, that it was wrong. I told him my mommy did it when she punished me. He asked me if I had been bad. I said yes, 'cause my mommy said I was. He told me it was a sin—being bad—'cause God says to `honor your father and mother.'" Peter is eight years old, and he's already learned that he's never going to be good enough. Nothing he does is good enough for his mommy and he's afraid that God will stop loving him because he doesn't honor his mother like Father Williams says he should. He can't seem to do anything right. Even when he thinks he's being good, he gets hit. Sometimes he gets tired of trying. He gets hit for bad things he didn't even do. "Maybe I should just do them anyway," he thinks. "Then it wouldn't matter that I get hit." Sometimes he can tell that his mother will be hitting him soon. He doesn't know how he knows, he just does. And he can't stop her. All

"Children's voices cry out for help for themselves and their parents..."

he can do is to do something that he knows will get it over with. Sometimes getting the rod is better than waiting for it. "Maybe Jesus wasn't talking about kids like me when he said that little kids shouldn't be hurt," he thinks. "Or else why wouldn't Miss Little and Father Williams talk to my mommy?"

Tiffany

"I love my daddy a lot. Sometimes he plays with me in the pool, but when I splash too much he yells at me. He says I'm a stupid idiot. I don't know what an idiot is but I don't think it's very good. Sometimes he says nobody loves me cause I'm no good. He says I was born just to make his life miserable. I don't mean to." Tiffany is five years old and already knows that her life has no value—that she doesn't deserve to be loved. She's learned that people she loves don't love her back—she's unlovable. She doesn't know how to feel good about herself because her daddy doesn't see anything good in her. "He should know," she thinks. "'cause he's my daddy and daddys know everything. I'll probably never be able to do anything right in my life. I wish I could make my daddy love me."

All of these children have been abused by adults whose responsibility it is to love and protect them, who in the assumption of parenthood made a sacred pact to provide a safe and nuturing environment in which children might flourish. These children suffer from invisible scars inflicted by the actions and words of their parents. But these children haven't only been abused by the acts of their parents. Even more tragically, they've been hurt by the failure of others to recognize their pain and allow them, and their families, an opportunity to heal. Without that recognition and intervention some of these children will continue to be victims trhoughout their lifetime. And some will go on to abuse others, to live out the destructive lessons they learned in their childhood.

But there is an answer. And the first step is to recognize that in most cases, prayer alone is simply not enough. Sometimes we have to actively intercede and intervene on behalf of a child. An adult might say, "What right do I have to interfere in this family—what right do I have to pull a family apart?" The eyes and heart of a child plead for you to do just that, to allow for the family to heal, to restore a healthy balance that will permit the child to expreience true, safe love. They beg for you to take them under your arm when those around them are unable to live out Christ's command of nurturing and protecting children. An adult voice might say, "Above everything else, children need the love of their parents, not the interference of social workers. The family is a sacred institution, protected by God." Children's voices cry out for help for themselves and their parents that they might realize their right to receive healthy, not hurtful love, from their parents. No "sacred" institution of God would allow for the harming of a child, for the deprivation of Christian love.

Our right to "invade" the privacy of a family is not only a question of religious interpretation, but it is a moral, ethical and social struggle that we must resolve individually and in community. It remains an unresolved struggle because of our fears—fears that are grounded in some measure of reality. The person who says, "I'm afraid that the family will reject me or retaliate if I meddle," has probably had an experience where that very thing happened. In their effort to help with a certain problem, they were rejected. Fears based on some prior experience, form the basis of reasons adults use for not "interfering" in a distressed family. The reasons they offer are personally valid reasons. They are valid because these things do happen. There is no way around that. Sometimes people in need do reject our help. Sometimes people who directly or indirectly turn to us for aid in resolving their problems become angered by our suggested solutions. People who are behaving in a way that they feel shameful about, feel relief that it's "out in the open" but at the same time become hostile in response to their embarrassment. It becomes a question of risk and sacrifice. Am I willing to risk the feared consequence, and potentially sacrifice my comfort, in order to help a child in need, or shall I spare myself possible discomfort at the expense and sacrifice of the child and the child's family? Am I willing to put aside my own needs for the physical and/or spiritual healing and salvation of a child and his or her family? No matter how we personally come to terms with these questions, those valid reasons can never be offered as an excuse. There is absolutely no excuse for not acting on behalf of a child that is being injured, continuously exposed to terror or confusion or a sense of being unloved.

Unfortunately, this dilemma of our "right to interfere" forms only one of two basic issues underlying the multitude of reasons given by adults for their failure to actively respond to abusive situations. The other issue relates to a simple lack of information regarding family mistreatment and child abuse. "I don't know how to tell if a child's being abused or not." "I don't know what resources are available." "I don't really know what's appropriate or inappropriate parenting—and who am I to stand in judgement?" Setting aside the issue of judgement, and focusing on recognition, it is undeniable that certain behaviors are easier than others to identify as being harmful or hurtful. Unfortunately, abusive behavior is not always easy to recognize.

Because the "injuries" are often internal and because abused children are not a homogeneous group, the signs and symptoms of abuse may extend across a continuum. Abused children may be withdrawn, clingy, compliant or risk-taking, defiant, delinquent. They may do extremely well in school or they may flunk out. There is no one profile, or set of characteristics from which to identify a victim.

Adults often respond to this absence of characteristics by saying, "That's ridiculous—that's the same as saying every child is a potential victim! Do you expect me to walk through life suspecting every child of being abused?" It's not ridiculous. It's sadly true. Every child is a potential victim of abuse. But there is no need to look with suspicion on all children and their families. There is a definite need and Christian responsibility, however, for all of us to look at every child with open eyes, open hearts, and a willingness, no matter how distressing to us, to see their expressions of pain. As irrelevant as they may be, recent statistics claim that one in four girls and one in eight boys will be abused in some way by the time they're eighteen. That's a lot of children. But even if it were just one child, it would be one too many.

Abusive behavior can also be difficult to identify because our focus is on the *intention* of the offender rather than on the *perception* of the victim. "She didn't mean to hurt him, it was an accident." "He was just bathing her, he didn't mean anything sexual by it." "He'd never do anything like that, he loves his wife and kids." Sadly, it's a given of human nature that good people sometimes do bad things. Seemingly healthy, well-functioning people sometimes need help. No matter how well-meaning people may be, they have ultimate responsibility for their behavior and the impact that it has on others—especially on children. In questions of injury, the ultimate reality is the perception of the person who felt victimized. In denying a child's reality, we are giving the message that their feelings and perceptions are not only inaccurate, but valueless. And that in itself, is damaging. Children have the right and need to know that they are important, that their feelings matter and will be responded to in a caring manner.

It's always easy to explain after-the-fact, why we did not act. In the case of child abuse, there may always be a reason, but there is never an excuse. Christians consider it sinful not to reach out and help a person in pain. They acknowledge that sins of "ignorance" are forgiven by God. But for how long can we continue to justify our sins of omission by our lack of knowledge or understanding?

As for me, I'd rather have to say I'm sorry to a family for interfering where no interference was needed, than to have to look into the eyes of a child and say I'm sorry for not interfering when help was needed. ■

CYNTHIA STOUT, M.F.C.C., M.Ed., is associate clinical director of S.A.F.E. (Stop Abusive Family Environments) of The Psychological Center of Fuller Theological Seminary and is completing a doctorate in clinical psychology. For the past eight years, she has specialized in the assessment and treatment of perpetrators and victims of abuse of all ages.

"...one in four girls and one in eight boys will be abused in some way by the time they're eighteen."

Wife Abuse and Scripture

by Phyllis and James Alsdurf

A woman wrote to us, "I would never in my wildest nightmares have dreamed that my husband would ever abuse me, but he did. My husband is a Christian, but his rage at things is unreal. I took our two-month-old son and fled after the fourth time he struck me, but I had received counsel that it was my duty to stay and suffer for Jesus' sake."

Suffering for Jesus' sake: Is that what the Scripture has to say to the victim of abuse? Can the minister offer more than platitudes about submitting and trusting God to the battered women who seek pastoral counsel? Often, battered women are among those who accept the authority of Scripture in their lives, and they come to their pastors struggling to reconcile the Bible's seemingly harsh words on submission and the sanctity of marriage with the reality of their abuse. Many times abusers also appear to adhere to these rationalizations of violence in their marriage and home.

Suffering and Scripture

The connection that many battered women make between their ability to suffer violence from their husbands and their Christian commitment reflects what is widely and erroneously taught within evangelical churches about submission of women in marriage. It is a perspective that makes women more susceptible to violence and also heightens the likelihood that battered women will remain in abusive relationships long after they should. For those who accept Scripture as authoritative, a legitimate understanding of what the Bible says in regard to abuse can come only when Scripture is considered in its entirety, when its broader themes are the backdrop against which isolated texts are interpreted. An appreciation for the principles, laws, and methods of interpretation is a necessary part of this task. One basic hermeneutical principle is that the parts of Scripture be interpreted in relation to one another. To take verses out of their context is to distort and violate the inspired truth of God.

Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite, a theology professor at Boston University, contends that "women with a violent spouse have believed that the Bible actually says what they have been taught it says—that women are inferior in status before husband and God and deserving of a life of pain." While women may accept this viewpoint through many episodes of violence, she says, eventually some women come to an awareness that the violence against them is wrong.

"But no sooner do women in violent relationships begin to develop an ideological suspicion that their subordination is wrong, than they are told that resistance to this injustice is unbiblical and unchristian. They are told that Christian women are meek and that to claim rights for themselves is the sin of pride. Some women at this point cease to struggle further. Some continue to struggle but abandon the church... Some in fact do come to a new hermeneutic and begin to apply it to the Scriptures with the incrediblediscovery not only that the Bible does not support the battering of wives, but that the Scriptures are more on the side of such women than they had ever dared hope." (Thistlethwaite, 1981)

Submission and the Battered Woman

At the heart of the view that the battered wife must "suffer for Jesus' sake" is often the belief that the woman must submit to her husband in all things, a heresy that runs counter to Jesus' attitude toward women. When a woman cries out to Jesus, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you" (Luke 11:27), he replies, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28). He thus explodes the confines of traditional Jewish roles for women and clearly demonstrates that he sees women as disciples on equal footing with men, not as sexual stereotypes. In sharp contrast to the culture of his day, Jesus taught women as well as men, using both males and females in his parabolic illustrations. He first announced his Messiahship to a woman and first appeared as the resurrected Christ to women. It is Jesus himself, points out New Testament theologian S. Scott Bartchy (1984), who calls us to examine the ways we use the power we have and "any satisfaction we may feel with one-sided submission." Bartchy cites Mark 10:42-43 as an example of how Jesus confronted the presuppositions of male power and dominance:

"You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all."

"Fidelity ... is not achieved simply by staying out of other people's beds."

Although Paul is often labeled a misogynist by his detractors (usually based upon a cursory look at one or two problematic passages), a more comprehensive examination of his writings reveals that the principle of mutual-submission also undergirds his views on Christian marriage. In Colossians 3:18-19 he writes, "Wives, adapt yourselves to your husbands, that your marriage may be a Christian unity. Husbands, be sure to give your wives much love and sympathy; don't let bitterness or resentment spoil your marriage." (Phillips Translation).

From his examination of 1 Corinthians 7:4-5, Bartchy (1981) concludes that Paul understood marriage between Christians as "a matter of full mutuality. ...The term *homois*, translated 'likewise,' is the strongest word available in Greek to express the meaning, 'in the same way.' With the words Paul rejects the chain of command in the patriarchal households that were so typical of the Mediterranean area in the first century." But, Bartchy notes, too many men have used Ephesians 5:23 ("the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church") as permission to discount other texts that call for mutuality in decision making and the principle of submission.

The Law of Love

It is not a one-sided, hierarchial view of submission that emanates from Scripture. Rather, the principle of mutual submission (Ephesians 5:21; 1 Corinthians 7:3-4 and 11:11-12; Galatians 3:28) is the model for relationships between husbands and wives, ensuring that the qualities of mutual respect, protection, and kindness characterize marriage. It is a "way of living" says author Pat Gundry (1980), that is both God-honoring and person-honoring. Such a biblical view of relationships, if actually endorsed by pastors, could provide a strongly needed support system for battered women and a basis for holding men accountable for their behavior.

To stress wifely submission in a vacuum devoid of husbandly love can result in a disregard for a woman's report of violence and place the woman and her children in great physical danger. Ultimately, it can perpetuate the cycle of violence. For to endorse submission one-dimensionally is to reject the whole counsel of Scripture. What it means practically is that the sanctity of the woman's personhood is ignored and the view of wife as property is perpetuated.

As Richard Foster rightly discerns, if anywhere, "the sting of the teaching [on submission] falls upon the dominant partner" (Foster, 1978, p. 104). To recognize the call to submission is not to ignore the "law of love as taught by Jesus" (p.105), Foster states, and when submission offends this law it is no longer legitimate, biblical submission. Submission, therefore, "reaches the end of its tether when it becomes destructive." An inordinate emphasis upon the principle of wifely submission can cloud the fact that wife abuse represents a profound disregard for the law of love.

The risk of not submitting to the law of love, says Foster, is that the words of Jesus and Paul are turned into a new legalism: "If a woman comes in telling of marital rape and every conceivable inhumanity, she is simply and grandly told that unless there is adultery or desertion she has no `biblical' basis for divorce" (p.144). Such a mentality, Foster declares, subtly reinforces the view that men are to remain dominant.

Fidelity and Person-Keeping

Ongoing violence by a husband toward his wife is an offense to the integrity of human life. Ultimately, the violence may destroy both the marriage and the victim. The Epistle to the Hebrews says that marriage should be "held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will judge the immoral and adulterous" (13:4). If we understand fidelity to imply much more than sexual faithfulness and to encompass the honoring of one's partner in a life-giving way, marital violence becomes a manifestation of infidelity. Lewis Smedes (1983), professor of ethics at Fuller, offers an important perspective: "Fidelity is a dynamic, positive posture that needs renewing and recreating constantly. It is not achieved simply by staying out of other people's beds." Instead, fidelity is a "person-keeping" commitment in which each partner in the

"Even a cursory look at church history provides ample evidence that the church has failed women. "

marriage works at the "other's happiness, healing, wholeness and freedom." Under such a standard anything that violates a marriage would be considered adultery. Violation of the marriage by any means is basically what the seventh commandment addresses, Smedes asserts.

Far too many battered women have been told by their pastors that in response to their submission God will either stop the violence or, as an equally acceptable solution, give them the endurance to live with it. Thus, the expectation is that a wife should submit to her husband regardless of whether the abuse continues, since her responsibility is first and foremost to be submissive; her safety and right not to be violated are secondary to that spiritual responsibility. To endorse such a view of submission is to distort the biblical intent of submission and to pervert God's intention for the marriage relationship.

Marriage and Divorce

When you talk about divorce to a Christian woman who is the victim of physical abuse, she may cite Malachi 2:16 — "`I hate divorce,'" says the Lord God of Israel"—as a major reason that she is staying in her marriage. Many victims have heard sermons preached against divorce on the basis of that verse or have been counseled to submit to their abuser because "God hates divorce." And almost without exception, those very women are shocked when they fina out what the last half of that verse proclaims: "and I hate a man's covering himself [or "his wife" says a footnote in the New International Version] with violence as well as with his garment,' says the Lord Almighty."

"Why haven't I heard anyone preaching about that?" asked one amazed woman who attended a workshop in which we pointed out this passage. She is by no means alone.

The violence that an abusive husband perpetuates against his wife is a betrayal of his oath to love, honor, and commit himself to her. This truth is clearly revealed in that same Malachi passage, when God clarifies just why tearful prayers and offerings will go unheeded: "The Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant." That break in faith and in the marriage is the outgrowth of the abusive husband's actions.

A husband's violence towards his wife always offends the covenant and partnership that is under the rule of God's love, and may in some situations indicate that the couple no longer has what scripturally can be identified as a marriage.

We agree with theologian Karl Barth in his assertion that when the integrity of human life is not sustained within a marriage, then

"...the word of God may contain a "No" and powerfully and authoritatively express the final condemnation of a marriage, so that one is forced to conclude that the marriage itself no longer is undergirded ...by the divine command. In this case, dissolution by divorce is recognition of the fact that God has already brought the marriage under the judgement of nonexistence." (Anderson and Guernsey, 1984, pp. 138-139)

Clearly God's intent from creation was for people to experience companionship, not divorce. But there will always exist the tension between God's intent and people's choices. And when a marriage is being suffocated by the destructive presence of violence, threat, and intimidation, the "law of love *(agape)* dictates that there should be divorce." (Foster, 1985, p. 145). Jesus' words on marriage and divorce have been abstracted into a new "law of marriage and divorce," notes theologian Ray Anderson, and the unfortunate result is that pastors use this as their framework for making decisions about how they will minister to battered wives. In such marriages the perpetuation of abuse is far more damaging and sinful than is the danger of divorce. And the burden should not be placed upon the victim to justify her actions, but upon the abuser to confess his sin and demonstrate that destructive patterns have changed.

The New View of Women

The Old Testament resounds with the theme of God's identification with and care for the oppressed—the fatherless, the widow, the stranger (Proverbs 3:31-32 and 6:16-18, Psalms 82:2-4). And Christ's coming was the fulfillment of that central message. He was the one annointed "to preach good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed" (Luke 4:18-19, New International Version). If Jesus is Good News to anyone, it is to those who are oppressed.

No wonder women in particular welcomed the Good News which Jesus proclaimed. He announced the Kingdom of God as a festive, glorious banquet to which all persons are

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Guidelines for Pastors

Jim and Phyllis Alsdurf offer these guidelines for pastors counseling victims of wife abuse:

1. Admit the fact that wife abuse exists in your church. Many pastors hold patriarchal worldviews which they believe to be divinely ordained, and because of this commitment find it more difficult to hear or effectively respond to the problems of battered women than to other situations of oppression. By not acknowledging the problem, a pastor only perpetuates it and discourages the victim.

2. Recognize that wife abuse is a sanctity-of-life issue. To be for life means to actively crusade against wife abuse and the social structures which foster it. Pastors can open the door for an abused woman to approach them by making announcements from the pulpit about area shelters or support groups for abusers and victims. They can introduce and discuss the problem in Sunday School classes, invite a local spokesperson to speak at a church forum on the topic or preach a sermon on the topic.

3. Examine your own attitudes toward women and your views on women's roles in the marital relationship. The issues of sex roles, marriage and divorce are central to a discussion of wife abuse. Pastors need to be aware of their attitudes in these areas because those attitudes will seriously affect the counsel given. Before accepting the challenge of working with an abused woman, pastors should have a clear understanding of the circumstances under which they would permit or support divorce. This is not to suggest that divorce is the only option in situations of abuse, but in some cases the sanctity of a woman's life will call for the termination of her marriage.

4. Work in conjunction with other trained professionals when counseling battered women. Few pastors have acquired the necessary counseling skills, or have the time available to respond to all the complexities of an abuse situation. Unfortunately, many pastors are unwilling to refer victims to appropriate resources, a fact which further complicates their involvement with victims. An abused woman should be directed to appropriate legal counsel for information regarding her physical protection, be introduced to local programs for victims, and be encouraged to confide in a friend who can struggle with the issues of faith that abuse raises.

5. Pastors need to read their Bibles with a new alertness to the problem of wife abuse. Much in Scripture very specifically addresses the issue of violence, and it is the responsibility of the clergy to preach and teach such passages in relation to this problem. In many cases the research that has considered the relationship between wife abuse and Christian faith has presented theological understandings of Christian faith and church history that are biased and contain unorthodox or even simplistic theological assertions. (For instance, to identify the Apostle Paul as a misogynist on the basis of a few biblical passages taken out of context is misleading, and reflects a lack of thorough scholarship in the interpretaion of Scripture.) A separation must be made between what pastors do or feel about wife abuse and what in Scripture and Christian tradition actually speaks to that issue. ■

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Mirror, mirror on the wall

— *From page 6*

and spiritual healing process. We need to acknowledge that until that behavioral change has been made, the victim continues to be at risk. We may need to support the offender and family through temporary separation. And in those unfortunate cases where enough change can not be made to ensure the safety of the victim, we may be called upon to offer support through divorce.

Regardless of the type of offense, it must be seen for what it is—an attempt to relieve pain, not to inflict pain. Undeniably these men and women have learned inappropriate and destructive means to meet their normal needs. But there is a motivation to care for themselves. And what they need is direction to meet those needs in healthier ways. They need an opportunity to choose to change and support in that choice. You and I can start that healing process by our willingness to view offenders as valuable men and women worthy of our help.

Yes, abusive behavior is disturbing and disgusting. And we all prefer to turn away from what we see as sinful behavior. But was Christ disgusted by Mary Magdalene? The answer is a resounding "No!" But he was disturbed by the crowd and their hasty willingness to condemn her in false piety. We're not Christ, but we are striving Christians, commited to sharing God's healing love without judgement. In our human weakness we do not consistently offer unconditional acceptance. It's far too easy to satisfy our Christian conscience by saying, "I prayed for her (or him)." Rather, we must actively reach out in compassion and understanding, with a sincere desire to lead an injured soul back to God's love. To the offender, we must offer direction and encourage responsibility. And we must offer protection to the victim.

If all you feel capable of is praying for the offender's healing, then it's better that you first pray for your own. Pray that God will allow your love to expand beyond the limits of prejudice and blindness. Pray that God will give you the strength and wisdom not to be the one to cast the first stone. ■

A New Year's Offering

More than 120 different language groups live within fifty miles of Fuller Theological Seminary. Their presence requires adjustments in local churches and denominations, schools, political structures, government services, other social programs and in our theological education. Not only has the world come to us, we have sent our alumni to the world. FTS alumni now serve in more than 120 countries. Currently, more than 65 countries are represented among our students.

With the prospects of an ever-widening range of peoples coming to the Seminary and the churches we serve, and with Fuller's ever-widening potential for influence in our world in mind, The Mission Concerns Committee has planned a conference around the theme, "Thinking Globally — Acting Locally." The conference will climax two years of discussions with sister institutions, churches and mission agencies. The three-day event will feature plenary addresses and workshops which seek to apply both local and global perspectives to theological education, local church ministries and parachurch ministries. CODEL, an agency involved in facilitating development education, is helping to sponsor the event.

Note the dates on your calendar — January 16, 17, 18, 1990. The conference will be held on the Fuller campus in Pasadena. ■

Wife Abuse and Scripture

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invited, including the maimed, the poor, the sinners, the ritually unclean—all the outcasts of society. No doubt these fringe categories were composed of a majority of women (Storrie, 1984).

Even a cursory look at church history provides ample evidence that the church has failed women. Rather than proclaiming their equal standing as heirs in Christ, it has perpetuated their victimization through the misapplication of Scripture. By its failure to stand courageously against a patriarchy that has oppressed women, the church has fallen prey to the same process by which Scripture was used to defend slavery. Though God never supported stavery, it was not until social upheavals made slavery impractical that most Christians stopped using Scripture to defend that oppressive institution of which they were a part.

If we know that a hierarchial view encourages abuse and that submission to abuse reinforces it, should we not then seek to examine what Scripture is saying in its entirety about male/female relationships? The church must no longer lend its support, tacit or otherwise, to hierarchy and patriarchy. It must support Christ's emancipation proclamation to women. ■

Continuing Education...Influence and Impact by Alvin S. Jepson

In the foreword of Ronald Cervero's book, Continuing Education for Professionals, Donald Schon of M.I.T. notes, "Continuing education has a great advantage over other educational modalities." Why? Because of who it serves—adult learners.

Over the past 50-75 years, adult education has grown from an insignificant educational sideline to a multibillion-dollar enterprise. Last year alone, over 60 million adults were "taking courses." Reasons for the swelling ranks of adult learners range from new information needed to keep up with one's profession or job, to courses and seminars taken for the enjoyment of gaining new information. A common stand in this continuum is high motivation and in most instances an ability to put knowledge gained, quickly into practice.

The 1989 conference, "Growing the Church Through Small Groups," serves as a good example of adult learning. Sponsored by Fuller Theological Seminary, Stephen Ministries and Serendipity, the conference drew 1,010 registrants. Only three percent of these persons were "students" in the traditional sense. Church professionals made up 55 percent of the registrants, 13 percent were conference leaders, and the remaining 29 percent were laypersons active in various ways in their local church.

Most of them came out of a need to transfer ideas and knowledge about small group ministry into more effective practice. Mr. Bob Bartosch, founder of Overcomers Outreach, and a workshop leader in a previous Small Group Conference, says, "My wife, Pauline, and I just returned from Albuquerque, New Mexico, where we participated in a conference called 'Christians Dealing With Dependency.' There were over 200 in attendance. The exciting thing is that this conference is a direct result of the Small Groups Conference."

Expectations are high when members of an audience have the ability to immediately test information offered against their own experiences. Coupled with the fact that participants have carved out time from an already full schedule, this creates high demands for such a constituency to be well served.
Recognizing that our continuing education clientele at Fuller are persons of professional ability and wide experience in their Christian service challenges us in our task. Our goals are high: excellent leadership, relevant educational formats and timely topics. A sampling of our conference and workshop titles for 1989-90 reflects this:

- "Liability: Balancing Prevention and Risk"
- "Growing the Church Through Small Groups"
- "The Church in Action—Ministries of Healing"
- "The Church: Welcoming Persons with Developmental Disabilities"
- "Healing the Cycle of Abuse"
- "The Homeless and Chemical Dependency"

Hardly the conventional routine of seminary curriculum, these efforts project the Seminary's vision to influence and impact the Church and the world beyond our basic mission of preparing women and men for ministry as pastors, clinical psychologists, counselors, missionaries and educators. Fuller's statement of vision is: "Within the guidelines of our statement of faith, we will continue to make disciples, call the Church to renewal, work for the moral health of society, seek peace and justice in the world, and uphold the truth of God's revelation. Our goals will not change. They are inherent in our identity as an institution."

If you would like additional information about programs sponsored by Continuing Education, write to: Lowell W. Berry Institute for Continuing Education in Ministry, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA 91182 ■

ALVIN S. JEPSON, Director of the Lowell W. Berry Institute for Continuing Education in Ministry.